

86 EMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND  
EEFOEMER

the least excusable of her many *amours* was  
sad am  
repulsive.

Meantime other great workers, as diligent as  
she, -wer  
steadily pursuing their lifework. Littré", whom  
Zola kne v  
slightly, for Hachettes were his publishers, and  
on whom. It  
called in his modest second-floor rooms in the  
Rue d'Assae  
was continuing his great dictionary of the  
French language,  
and making his first attempt to enter the  
Academy, to to  
foiled, however, by the frantic bigotry of Bishop  
Dupaulouj  
whereas those minor lights, Camille Doucet  
and PreVost  
Paradol, secured without difficulty the honours  
of election  
Then Littré's neighbour, Michelet, — another  
of Hachette\*  
authors — whose quiet *soirees* Zola, like other  
young literar;  
men, occasionally attended, was completing his  
History o  
France. And there was much activity among  
historica  
writers generally, and, in particular, a large  
output of book:  
throwing light on phases and personages  
of the grea  
Ee volution.

At that period also a little band of so-called  
Parnassiai  
poets, inspired, some by Leconte de Lisle, and  
others b;  
Baudelaire, but, for the most part, gifted with  
little breadtl  
of thought, was imparting to French verse an  
extreme lit  
erary polish, at times attaining real beauty of  
expression

and at others lapsing into a *préciosité*, which  
neither sonority  
of sound nor wealth of imagery could save from  
being ridicu-  
lous. Meanwhile, in dramatic literature,  
Ponsard was pro-  
ducing his version of "Le Lion Amoureux," and  
Augier 111  
"Contagion," the latter's success being due,  
however, mor-  
to political reasons than to any intrinsic  
merit.<sup>2</sup> Then, ii

<sup>1</sup> The first Volume had appeared in 1863.

<sup>2</sup> Napoleon III. and his wife attended the first  
performance at the Odéon;